

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses

Ron Dodson
Audubon International

Objectives:

1. Enhance wildlife habitats on existing golf courses by working with golf course superintendents and providing advice for ecologically sound course management.
2. Encourage active participation in conservation programs by golfers, golf course superintendents, golf officials, and the general public.
3. Recognize the people who are actively participating in environmentally responsible projects.
4. Educate the public and golfing community about the benefits of golf courses and the role they play relative to the environment and wildlife.

Start Date: 1991

Project Duration: ongoing

Total Funding: \$100,000 per year

In 1991, Audubon International launched the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses (ACSP). The ACSP provides an advisory information service to help golf courses conduct environmental projects and achieve positive recognition for their efforts.

As of June 30, 2001, the end of Audubon International's fiscal year, 2,134 courses throughout the United States were enrolled in the program. Member courses earned 531 certificates of achievement in specific components of the program during the year; 75 were certified as Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries by implementing and documenting a full complement of conservation activities. A total of 290 golf courses, or 14% of participants, had achieved this distinction by the fiscal year



As part of their participation in the ACSP, Edgewood Country Club in Riverdale, New Jersey, naturalized nearly 30 acres of formerly mowed golf course roughs with wildflowers and native grasses to improve habitat and aesthetics throughout the course.

end and been designated as Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries.

The Audubon Signature Cooperative Sanctuary Program for golf courses under development enrolled 25 new members during the fiscal year. That brought the total to 94 properties in 40 different eco-regions, covering approximately 40,000 acres throughout the contiguous U.S., Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Canada, and Portugal. The number of Certified Audubon Signature Cooperative Sanctuaries rose from 19 to 27 during that period.

Results of Audubon International's 2001 Managed Lands Survey indicate that golf courses were able to increase wildlife habitat from an average of 46 acres to nearly 60 acres per course. Nearly 70 percent decreased water use by an average of 1.9 million gallons of water per year per course. Sixty-three percent decreased pesticide use, and 91 percent used pesticides with a lower toxicity level since joining.

In April, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2, awarded

Audubon International its 2001 Environmental Quality Award. This award was presented specifically for Audubon International's efforts to promote environmental stewardship through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses. The award recognized the meaningful partnerships Audubon International has formed with the golf course industry resulting in significant improvements in its environmental management practices nationwide.

Summary Points

- Number of Golf Courses enrolled in the ACSP: 2,134 golf courses
- Acres of land enrolled: one-half million
- Number of Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Golf Courses: 290
- Number of new Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Golf Courses in 2000/01: 75
- Total number of golf courses certified in Environmental Planning: 1,024
- Number of golf courses certified in Environmental Planning in 2000/01: 92
- Percentage of golf courses certified in two or more program components: 23%
- Number of requests for certification reviewed in 2000/01: 620
- Percentage of certification requests awarded: 86%
- Number of bird species sighted on golf courses during the 2001 North American Birdwatching Open: 349
- Number of new birds fledged from nest boxes on 105 golf courses reporting in the 2000 Nest Box Survey: 2,915
- Number of golf course personnel and others educated by Audubon International in 2000/01 through classroom seminars, conference presentations, team meetings, and fieldwork: 2,800



Warren Golf Course in Indiana built several bat boxes as part of their efforts to gain certification in Wildlife and Habitat Management.